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P R E F A C E.

In concluding the first volume of this Journal, the editor wishes to say a few things regarding its contents, even at the risk of repeating, in some cases, what has already been said. He hopes that his judgment in the selection of articles will be, in the main, approved. In so novel an undertaking it is not to be expected that the proper elevation and range will be found at once. But the editor thinks that he has acquired some valuable experience that will aid him in preparing the second volume.

The reader will notice, upon looking over the table of contents, that about one-third of the articles relate to Art, and hence recommend themselves more especially to those who seek artistic culture, and wish at the same time to have clear conceptions regarding it.

It is, perhaps, a mistake to select so little that bears on physical science, which is by far the most prominent topic of interest at the present day. In order to provide for this, the editor hopes to print in the next volume detailed criticisms of the "Positive Philosophy," appreciating its advantages and defects of method and system. The "Development Theory," the "Correlation of Physical, Vital and Mental Forces," the abstract theories in our text-books on Natural Philosophy, regarding the nature of attraction, centrifugal and centripetal forces, light, heat, electricity, chemical elements, &c., demand the investigation of the speculative thinker. The exposition of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit will furnish pertinent thoughts relating to method.

While the large selection of translations has met with approval from very high sources, yet there has been some disappointment expressed at the lack of original articles. Considerably more than half of the articles have been original entirely, while all the translations are new. The complaint, however, relates more especially to what its authors are pleased to call the Un-American character of the contents of the Journal. Here the editor feels like pleading ignorance as an excuse.—In what books is one to find the true "American" type of Speculative Philosophy? Certain very honorable exceptions occur to every one, but they are not American in a popular sense. We, as a people, buy immense editions of John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, Comte,

Hamilton, Cousin, and others; one can trace the appropriation and digestion of their thoughts in all the leading articles of our Reviews, Magazines and books of a thoughtful character. If this is American philosophy, the editor thinks that it may be very much elevated by absorbing and digesting more refined aliment. It is said that of Herbert Spencer's works nearly twenty thousand have been sold in this country, while in England scarcely the first edition has been bought. This is encouraging for the American thinker: what lofty spiritual culture may not become broadly and firmly rooted here where thoughtful minds are so numerous? Let this spirit of inquiry once extend to thinkers like Plato and Aristotle, Schelling and Hegel—let these be digested and organically reproduced—and what a phalanx of American thinkers we may have to boast of! For after all it is not "*American thought*" so much as *American thinkers* that we want. To *think*, in the highest sense, is to transcend all *natural limits*—such, for example, as national peculiarities; defects in culture, distinctions in Race, habits, and modes of living—to be *universal*, so that one can dissolve away the external hull and seize the substance itself. The peculiarities stand in the way;—were it not for these, we should find in Greek or German Philosophy just the forms we ourselves need. Our province as *Americans* is to rise to purer forms than have hitherto been attained, and thus speak a "solvent word" of more potency than those already uttered. If this be the goal we aim at, it is evident that we can find no other means so well adapted to rid us of our own idiosyncracies as the study of the greatest thinkers of all ages and all times. May this Journal aid such a consummation!

In conclusion, the editor would heartily thank all who have assisted him in this enterprise, by money and cheering words; he hopes that they will not withdraw in the future their indispensable aid. To others he owes much for kind assistance rendered in preparing articles for the printer. Justice demands that special acknowledgment should be made here of the services of Miss Anna C. Brackett, whose skill in proof-reading, and subtle appreciation of philosophic thought have rendered her editorial assistance invaluable.

ST. LOUIS, December, 1867.